



*A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another.*  
William Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I

# The Cloak & Dagger Compendium

A HANDBOOK OF PRACTICAL SKILLS  
AND INVALUABLE KNOWLEDGE  
*FOR THIEVES, ROGUES, SCALLYWAGS,  
& OTHER DISREPUTABLE PERSONS*



Issue #3: Thieving Cant.  
Parlance of the Underworld

BY A COLLECTIVE OF ANARCHIST THIEVES  
EDITED BY ROBIN MARKS

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*It is certain stealing nourishes courage, strength, skill, tact...  
Lay partiality aside and answer me: is theft, whose effect is to  
distribute wealth more evenly, to be branded as a wrong...?  
Plainly, the answer is no.*

*- Marquis de Sade*

*Many a thief is a better man than many a clergyman, and  
miles nearer to the gates of the kingdom.*

*- George MacDonald*

## Disclaimer

The authors and editor of this publication disavow any connection to or endorsement of criminal organizations, including, but not limited to, governments, police forces, military forces, nation states, empires, colonizers, industrialists, imperialists, capitalists, and big businesses. Quite to the contrary, we wholeheartedly decry, detest, disdain, and wish to abolish all such organized criminal activity.

## FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR:

April 14, 2011

*Devoted Readers & Friends,*

*I am overjoyed to bring you the third issue of your favorite controversial periodical, The Cloak & Dagger Compendium! It is five days to the year since the first issue of the C&D was released, and, though I am deeply sorry for the long delay between issues two and three, I am delighted to finally offer this edition to those who have eagerly awaited its release.*

*Although many a month has transpired since the C&D #2, and many exciting events have transpired in the lives of the authors and your humble editor, we are all still committed to bringing you the finest product absolutely free of charge. We are, as we have always been and shall always be, completely dedicated to illuminating and preserving the black arts for those who would learn.*

*The C&D has received an overwhelming abundance of positive correspondence from readers of our past issues. To all those who have written in support of this endeavor, the authors send their thanks, and I offer you my personal gratitude as editor of the C&D.*

*However, along with the positive correspondence, we have also received some constructively critical and some outright negative responses from readers. As the editor of a publication I wholeheartedly stand behind and endorse, I feel it is important to use the preface to this issue to address the concerns of those who have responded negatively.*

*By far, the most common criticism we have received is that, by illuminating and cataloging the various tactics used by modern thieves,*

## V. AFTERWORD, FUTURE ISSUES

Well, friends, we're through our third issue. We hope you've enjoyed this little detour from practical skills and into the history of the language of the underworld. If not, please be patient as we work diligently to bring you C&D #4.

Because such a large span of time elapsed between the second and third issues, we feel it wise to avoid speculating about the release date of issue #4. Likewise, there are a variety of nefarious topics yet unexplored, although we have not yet decided which to pursue in the following issue.

So, dear readers, it shall have to remain a mystery for now! Until next time, bene darkmans.

- The Authors

## IV. SOURCES & RESOURCES

### *In Which We Encourage Further Erudition*

- <http://www.pascalbonenfant.com/18c/cant/>
- <http://www.fromoldbooks.org/NathanBailey-CantingDictionary/transcription.html>
- <http://www.fromoldbooks.org/Grose-VulgarTongue/>
- Nathan Bailey's 1737 *The New Canting Dictionary*
- *Lexicon Balatronicum*, 1811
- Francis Grose's *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*
- *Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux*, 1819

the C&D is putting our secrets into the hands of our enemies (commonly known as "blowing up"), and thus rendering those tactics obsolete and ineffective. As this is a common concern, we hope to alleviate the fears of our readers with the following response.

*Plain and simply, the agents of control and oppression are too stupid to take this information seriously, even on the rare chance that they stumble upon Yggdrasil Distro's website or Zine Library's site, or, rarer yet, if they happen to acquire a physical copy of the C&D. Most probably think the C&D is a novelty, joke, or collection of unimportant ephemera, if they give it any attention at all.*

*Moreover, even if our foes lay hands on this information, it in no way disempowers us. In order for the publication of this information to harm us, it would need to be read and internalized by a large majority of cops, grunts, security guards, judges, corporate tools, and politicians, not to mention the public. Because these zines are likely to remain underground and gain the interest only of those who benefit from the information herein, it is highly unlikely, nay, nearly impossible that the C&D is endangering or blowing up these tactics.*

*Let us visit some examples. Information on lockpicking is commonplace these days, particularly on the internet (youtube, anyone?). Yet, companies continue to manufacture and the public continues to use low-quality warded locks and pin-tumbler locks. Local newscasts bring bump keys to the public's attention quite regularly, yet bump keys are still a viable and effective tool for the modern thief. The same arguments can be made for pickpocketing, hustling, car theft, confidence theft and grifting, burgling, and so on. It is, as they say, the "information age". Very little of what the C&D publishes is original material- most of it has been published or broadcast before. The public has a very short memory*

*and a tiny attention span, and they are inclined to feel safe and secure with surrounded by their cushy baubles and complex gadgets. It is that false security that we will always be able to exploit, regardless of the individual tactics we do or do not use.*

*In the interest of the reader's patience and spatial limitations, I won't drone on about this issue, but there is one final point I'd like to make. That is, even if the C&D does in some cases render a particular tactic obsolete, that doesn't have to be a bad thing. Let the C&D, then, be a testament to past victories, and a goad toward developing new and diverse tactics. Times change, security changes, and tactics change with them. We shall never get so attached to a particular tactic that we're unwilling or afraid to share it.*

*I hope this addresses some of the concerns readers have expressed. I certainly encourage further discourse on the subject, and any further correspondences concerning this topic will be gratefully received by myself and the authors.*

*Thank you, readers, for trudging through this lengthy sermon of an editorial. I welcome you, rum coves and bene morts, to The Cloak & Dagger Compendium #3. Wishing you gullible marks, imperceptive foes, bountiful plunder, and success in all your clandestine activities.*

*Stay safe, rogues,  
- Robin Marks*

**Liberate (v.):** to steal, particularly from big business or corporations; used heavily by radicals. See also **expropriate**.

**Lift (v.): to steal, to shoplift. (1811)**

**Mark (n.):** a target, an intended "victim"; very common word among modern rogues. See *Historical-* **provender**.

**Pig (n.):** any law-enforcement official, especially police.

**Pilfer (v.):** to steal.

**Pinch (v.):** to steal, to lift.

**Pirate (v.):** to illegally download or access media via the internet.

**Popped, to get popped (adj., v.):** captured, arrested, to get arrested.

**Scam (v., n.):** to swindle or con, any thieving endeavor meant to deceive.

**Scamouflage (n.):** portmanteau of "scam" and "camouflage"; describes clothes and effects used to give false appearances, thus allowing one to steal and swindle more easily.

**Sketchy or Sketch (adj.):** dubious, shady, or questionable.

**Sketch, to keep (v.):** to stand lookout, to watch out for law-enforcement and other undesirables.

**Snitch (n.):** an informant, one who talks to the authorities. See *Historical-* **rat**.

**Snitches get stitches:** common term used to express violence and hostility toward those who collaborate with law-enforcement.

**Swag (n.):** goods obtained by theft or swindle. (1737, 1811, 1819)

**Universal key (n.):** bolt cutters; sometimes also a crow bar or any other heavy, universal breaking and entering device.

**Universal Fence (n.):** term used to describe the internet as a means of easily selling stolen goods.

**Wry neck day (n.):** day of execution.

## Y

**Yelp (v.):** to cry out for the police.

## Z

**Zad (n.):** a very crooked person.

## -Modern-

Some of the entries below are followed by parentheses. The numbers inside such entries represent the oldest documented usages of these words, and are meant to show that these words are historical as well as modern.

**5-0 or 6-up (n.):** law-enforcement official. See **pig**.

**Blow up (v.):** to alert authority figures to illegal activity by being careless and overt; to render a viable spot for thieving and mischief unsafe and unprofitable through unwise actions.

**Bolt (v.):** to hasten away, to run. (1811, 1819)

**Boost (v.):** to shoplift or steal.

**Booster bag (n.):** a foil-lined bag used for shoplifting.

**Bull (n.):** a railroad cop.

**Buy-None-Get-One-Free Sale (n.):** see **Five-finger discount**.

**Dine and dash (v.):** to flee a restaurant without paying the bill

**Expropriate (v.):** to steal goods from the dominant or ruling classes, particularly greedy capitalists and other businesspeople. See **liberate**.

**Fed (n.):** law-enforcement officials working for a federal agency.

**Filch (v.):** to steal. (1737)

**Five-finger discount (n.):** an item acquired by hand, thus an item that has been shoplifted; also describes the act of stealing: *Trader Joes was having a five-finger discount today.*

**Freddy, Freddie (n.):** park rangers and law-enforcement officials working for the Bureau of Land Management or the US Forest Service.

**Hero (n.):** a civilian (i.e.: non law-enforcement) who acts to thwart crime; usually a privileged, wealthy, white male with a very low IQ.

**Hustle (v.):** to con or swindle.

**Jack (v.):** to steal, to shoplift.

## II. DESCRIBING & DEFINING “CANT”

### *In Which We Reveal the Purpose of This Issue*

Devoted readers of the *Cloak & Dagger Compendium* will already have encountered thieving cant in the previous two issues. However, because canting language is a relatively obscure field of knowledge, new readers will most likely be unfamiliar with the concept of canting.

Wikipedia defines cant as “Jargon, argot, or cryptolect of a group, often implying its use to exclude or mislead people outside the group”. The *American Heritage Dictionary* gives a more succinct definition: “The special vocabulary peculiar to the members of a group”. In overly simple terms, cant can be thought of as slang.

Thieves’ cant, then, is the language endemic to thieves, beggars, and other “undesirable” street peoples. Thieves’ cant is most certainly not the only canting tongue in existence, but it is understandably the most relevant to the *C&D*.

In England and in other English-speaking countries, thieves and other miscreants have developed their own unique vocabulary and phrases that are meant to befuddle and confuse the public, its authority figures, and law enforcement officials. This language is rooted in the rogues’ dens and dim taverns of the Elizabethan era and earlier times, and has continued to progress and evolve through the ages. Many Elizabethan canting terms remain in the secretive colloquial of modern English and American thieves, and a variety of new terms have been coined by these same contemporary scoundrels.

Although the historical etymological veracity of some of these terms is disputed and debated among scholars, it cannot be denied that many such terms and phrases live on and are commonly employed in the modern dark tongues. Readers will certainly recognize some of these words and phrases, although many will perhaps be surprised that the origin of these words stretches back so far into the past.

The purpose of this issue of the *Cloak & Dagger* is to provide a thorough glossary of canting terms both historical and present. We hope this information is of great interest and use for the *personae non gratae* of the present day. Because many of the authors of the *C&D* are not only thieves but also avid gamers and roleplayers, we also offer forth this information for the ambitious roleplayer who seeks to enrich their Player-Character with clever jargon. Surely, the information herein is an invaluable wellspring for shady underworlders and dashing cutpurses in any roleplaying campaign.

The dictionary of canting terms that follows this section is not quite as comprehensive as we originally intended. Such a task would require more space than the zine format allows. Also, many of the terms and phrases used by the streetfolk who developed this cant are offensive to modern readers (especially anarchists and radicals) for a number of reasons. Many of these terms, and much of the language that we simply find impertinent to the modern thief, has been omitted. For those interested in a focused, intensive study of thieving cant, a list of sources used in the making of this zine and additional resources pertaining to canting tongue may be found toward the end of this issue.

## 5 - DESCRIBING & DEFINING "CANT"

### T

- Tayle drawers (n.):** a thief who steals swords from men's belts.  
**Thatch-gallows (n.):** a man of poor character.  
**Thief taker (n.):** someone who associates with thieves in order to arrest them and obtain rewards. See **prig napper**.  
**Three-legged mare, three-legged stool (n.):** the gallows.  
**Tom of Bedlam (n.):** see **abram man, mad tom**.  
**Topping cheat (n.):** the gallows.  
**Topping cove (n.):** hangman.  
**Touch (v.):** to arrest.  
**Trounce (v.):** to punish.  
**Tucked up (adj.):** hanged.  
**Turncoat (n.):** one who has betrayed his friends.  
**Turn off (v.):** to hang.  
**Twig (v.):** to realize that something is up.  
**Two-to-one shop (n.):** pawnbrokers.

### U

- Upright Man (n.):** chief thief of a guild. See **arch rogue, dimber damber, prince prig**.  
**Used up (adj.):** killed, dead.

### V

- Vamp (v.):** to pawn.  
**Varlet (n.):** criminal.  
**Vincent's law (n.):** the art of cheating at cards.  
**Vowel (v.):** to write an I.O.U.

### W

- Waterpad (n.):** river pirate.  
**Wedge (n.):** silver plate.  
**Whack (n.):** a share of booty obtained by fraud.  
**Whip jack (n.):** thief who pretends to be a sailor in order to gain free passage on boats and ships.  
**Wiper (n.):** handkerchief.  
**Wiper drawer (n.):** a pickpocket who steals handkerchiefs.  
**Wooden ruff (n.):** pillory.



**Rum diver, rum file (n.):** a skilled pickpocket.  
**Rum dubber (n.):** a skilled lockpicker.  
**Rum pad (n.):** the highway. See **pad**.  
**Rum padder (n.):** skilled and successful highwayman.  
**Rum prancer (n.):** a good horse.  
**Rusher (n.):** a home invader.

## S

**Salmon (n.):** an oath taken by a beggar.  
**Scamp (n.):** a highwayman.  
**Scapegallows, Slippigibbet (n.):** one who has escaped the gallows.  
**Scragged (adj.):** hanged.  
**Scragg'em fair (n.):** a public execution.  
**Screw (n.):** a lock pick or skeleton key. See **charm, dub, kate**.  
**Sham (n.):** a trick.  
**Sharper (n.):** a con man.  
**Sheriff's journeyman (n.):** hangman.  
**Sheriff's ball (n.):** an execution.  
**Sheriff's hotel (n.):** prison.  
**Sheriff's picture frame (n.):** gallows.  
**Shop (n.):** prison.  
**Sing (v.):** to call out, inform.  
**Slang (n.):** chains or shackles.  
**Slang (n.):** thieves' cant. See **flash lingo, gibberish, patter flash**.  
**Snap the glaze, star the glaze (v.):** to break a window.  
**Snapt (adj.):** captured.  
**Sneak (n.):** a pilferer.  
**Sop (n.):** a bribe.  
**Spring-ankle warehouse (n.):** prison.  
Squeak (n., v.): escape; 'to squeak' means to confess.  
**Stalling ken (n.):** place where stolen goods can be sold. See **fence**.  
**Stoop (n.):** the pillory.  
**Stop Hole Abbey (n.):** central hideout or guild hall for a thieves' guild.  
**Stretch, Swing (v., n.):** to hang, to be hanged; a hanging.  
**Swaddler (n.):** a thief who beats and murders his victims.  
**Swag (n.):** booty, plunder.  
**Sweat (v.):** to remove metal from a coin by using chemicals.

17 – HISTORICAL THIEVES' CANT

## III. A SELECTIVE DICTIONARY OF THIEVING CANT

*In Which We Learn the Flash Lingo of the Prince Prigs*

*-Historical-*

## A

**Abram (adj.):** naked  
**Abram cove (n.):** a naked or poor man. It can also mean a lusty strong rogue.  
**Abram man (n.):** a beggar who pretends to be mad. See **mad tom, tom of bedlam**.  
**To sham abram (v.):** to pretend to be sick or mad.  
**Adam Tiler (n.):** a pickpocket's associate, who receives the stolen goods and runs off with them. See **Bob**.  
**Affidavit Men (n.):** a witness for hire. Someone who will swear to anything in court if paid to do so.  
**Air and exercise:** He has had air and exercise, i.e.: he has been whipped at the cart's tail.  
**Amuse (v.):** to fling dust into the eyes of the person intended to be robbed; also to invent some plausible tale to delude a shopkeeper in order to put them off their guard.  
**Amuser (n.):** a rogue who uses the above tactic.  
**Anabaptist (n.):** a pickpocket caught in the act, and punished by being thrown into a pond.  
**Angler (n.):** pilferer or petty thief who, with a stick having a hook at the end, steals goods out of shop windows, grates etc. Also, someone who 'draws in' victims in order to rob them.  
**Angling for coppers:** begging out of a prison window with a cap or box let down on the end of a long string.  
**Arch Rogue:** The chief of a gang of thieves. See **dimber damber, prince prig, upright man**.  
**Ard (adj.):** hot, stolen.  
**Ark (n.):** a boat.  
**Ark ruffians (pl. n.):** rogues who prey on boat passengers and water travelers; pirate.

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**Artichoke:** hanged. See **hearty choke**.

**Avoir Du Pois Lay:** stealing brass weights off the counters of shops.

**Autem Bawler (n.):** a priest.

**Autem Diver (n.):** a pickpocket who operates in churches and temples.

**Autem Mort (n.):** a female beggar who hires children in order to inspire charity.

## B

**Babes in the wood (n.):** criminals in the stocks or pillory.

**Badge (n.):** a term for one who has had his hand burned as punishment.

**Bandog (n.):** a bailiff or sheriff.

**Barrow man (n.):** a man under sentence of transport.

**Bawdy basket (n.):** criminal who sells items from door to door, but makes most of their living by stealing.

**Beak (n.):** a justice of the peace or magistrate.

**Beef:** to "cry beef" is to give an alarm. To "be in a mans beef" is to wound him with a sword.

**Beggar maker (n.):** a man who owns a tavern.

**Beilby's Ball:** to "dance with Beilby's ball" is to be hanged.

**Ben (n.):** a fool.

**Bene (adj.):** good. See **rum**.

**Bene bowse (n.):** good beer.

**Bene cove (n.):** good fellow.

**Bene darkmans:** good night.

**Bene feaker (n.):** a counterfeiter.

**Bene feakers of gybes (n.):** counterfeiter of false passes.

**Bene mort (n.):** a good or trustworthy female companion.

**Bess, Betty (n.):** a crow bar. See **ginny, jemmy**.

**Bilboes (n.):** the stocks or prison.

**Bilk (v.):** to cheat or con.

**Bing, bing avast (v.):** to go or escape, escape quickly.

**Bingo (n.):** brandy or other spirit.

**Bingo boy (n.):** a drinker of brandy.

**Bingo mort (n.):** a female drinker of brandy.

**Birds of a feather:** rogues of the same gang.

**Bite (v.):** to steal.

**Black art (n.):** the art of lockpicking.

**Queer cove (n.):** a thief.

**Queer cuffin (n.):** a justice of the peace.

**Queer ken (n.):** a prison.

**Quod (n.):** prison.

**Quota (n.):** a thief's share of the booty.

## R

**Rag, Ready, Rhino, Ribbin (n.):** paper money.

**Rank rider (n.):** a highwayman.

**Rap:** taking a false oath.

**Rascal (n.):** a rogue or villain.

**Rat (n., v.):** an informer, to inform. See *Modern-* **snitch**.

**Rattling cove (n.):** a coachman.

**Rattling mumper (n.):** beggar who begs from coaches.

**Reader (n.):** a pocket book or purse.

**Reader merchant (n.):** pickpocket.

**Recruiting service (n.):** highway robbery.

**Repository (n.):** a gaol.

**Resurrection men (n.):** those employed by scientists to steal bodies from churchyards.

**Ring the changes (v.):** to exchange silver coins for those made of less valuable metal.

**Roast (v.):** to arrest.

**Robert's man (n.):** a successful thief.

**Rot gut (n.):** cheap, strong liquor.

**Rovers (n.):** pirates, wandering thieves.

**Rub (v.):** to run away.

**Ruffles (n.):** chains or shackles.

**Rufflers (n.):** beggars who pretend to be wounded soldiers or sailors.

**Rug (adj.):** safe and secure.

**Rum (adj.):** fine, good, valuable. See **bene**.

**Rum beck (n.):** a justice of the peace.

**Rum bite, rum fun (n.):** a clever trick.

**Rum bob (n.):** a skilled apprentice thief.

**Rum bung (n.):** a full purse. See **rum cod**.

**Rum cod (n.):** a purse filled with gold. See **rum bung**.

**Paum (v.):** to conceal in the hand, to palm.  
**Peach (v.):** to turn informer.  
**Peeper (n.):** a spying glass.  
**Penance board (n.):** the pillory.  
**Pig (n.):** an officer of the law.  
**Pigeon (n.):** a person easy to cheat. See **milch cow**.  
**Plate (n.):** money, silver, gold etc. See **iron, poney**.  
**Poney (n.):** money. See **plate, iron**.  
**Pop (v.):** to pawn. See *Modern-* **popped, got popped**.  
**Pop shop (n.):** pawnbrokers.  
**Porridge (n.):** prison.  
**Posse mobilitatis (n.):** a mob chasing a criminal.  
**Poulterer (n.):** one who opens mail and steals the money therein  
**Pound (n.):** prison.  
**Prad lay (n., v.):** to cut the saddlebags of horses and steal their contents.  
**Prad (n.):** a horse.  
**Prig, priggers (n.):** a thief, thieves.  
**Prig napper (n.):** one who catches thieves, a bounty hunter. See **thief taker**.  
**Priggers of prancers (n.):** horse thieves.  
**Priggers of cacklers (n.):** robbers of henhouses, chicken thieves.  
**Prince Prig (n.):** head of a group of thieves. See **arch rogue, dimber damber, upright man**.  
**Provondor (n.):** the victim of a thief. See *Modern-* **mark**.  
**Pull (v.):** to arrest.

## Q

**Quarromes (n.):** a body.  
**Queer (v.):** to confuse someone.  
**Queer bail (n.):** someone who pretends to have money in order to act as surety for an arrested person. When the person is released they disappear.  
**Queer bird (n.):** a person who returns to a life of crime when released from prison.  
**Queer bit maker (n.):** counterfeiter of coins.  
**Queer bung (n.):** an empty purse.

**Black box (n.):** a lawyer.  
**Blasted fellow (n.):** an abandoned or outcast rogue. See **brimstone**.  
**Blater (n.):** a stolen calf.  
**Bleaters (n.):** those cheated by a **Jack in the Box**.  
**Bleating rig:** sheep stealing.  
**Blow:** to "bite the blow" is to steal the goods.  
**Blue pigeons (n.):** thieves who steal lead off houses and other buildings.  
**Bluffer (n.):** an inn keeper.  
**Blunt (n.):** money.  
**Boarding school (n.):** a prison. [Ed.- Hah!]  
**Bob (n.):** shoplifter's assistant. One who receives stolen goods.  
**Boned (adj.):** seized, arrested.  
**Boung, Bung (n.):** a purse.  
**Boung nipper (n.):** a cutpurse or pickpocket.  
**Brimstone (n.):** an abandoned or outcast thief. See **blasted fellow**.  
**Bubber (n.):** a thief who steals from taverns.  
**Bufe (n.):** a dog.  
**Bufe nabber (n.):** a dog thief.  
**Bug (v.):** to exchange a material for one of less value.  
**Bung nipper (n.):** a pickpocket.  
**Burn the ken:** to flee a tavern without paying your bill. See *Modern-* **dine and dash**.  
**Bus napper (n.):** a constable.  
**Bus napper's kenchin (n.):** a watchman.  
**Buttock and file (n.):** a prostitute who steals from their clients.  
**Button (n.):** a fake coin.  
**Buzman (n.):** a pickpocket.

## C

**Cackle (v.):** to inform on a thief. See *Modern-* **snitch**.  
**Calle (n.):** a cloak or gown worn as a disguise.  
**Canter (n.):** a thief or beggar.  
**Canting Crew (n.):** a group of thieves or beggars.  
**Cap (v.):** to take an oath.  
**Captain Sharp (n.):** a person in a fixed game of chance whose job is to bully those who refuse to pay their debts.

**Caravan:** a large sum of money, or one who is cheated of a large sum of money.

**Cattle (n.):** vagrants, or women of the night.

**Charactered (adj.):** See **badge**.

**Charm (n.):** a lockpick. See **dub, kate, screw**.

**Chatts (n.):** the gallows.

**Clank (n.):** a silver tankard.

**Clank napper (n.):** one who steals silver tankards.

**Clicker (n.):** one who divides the booty between a group of thieves.

**Climb up a ladder to bed (v.):** to be hanged.

**Cloy (v.):** to steal.

**Cloyes (n.):** thieves.

**Cly (n.):** a pocket.

**Cly the jerk (v.):** to be whipped.

**Colt (n.):** one who lends a horse to a highwayman, or an apprentice thief.

**Confect (adj.):** counterfeited.

**Content (n.):** a person murdered for resisting a robbery.

**Cove (n.):** a man.

**Cracksman (n.):** a house breaker.

**Cramp word (n.):** the sentence of death.

**Crash (v.):** to kill.

**Crop (v.):** to hang.

**Cry cockles (v.):** to be hanged.

**Cull (n.):** an honest man.

**Cullability:** easily cheated.

**Curbing law:** the act of hooking items out of a window. See **angling**.

## D

**Dangle (v.):** to hang.

**Darbies (n.):** chains, handcuffs.

**Darby:** easy money.

**Darkee (n.):** a dark or hooded lantern.

**Darkmans (n.):** night time. See **lightmans**.

**Dawb (v.):** to bribe.

**Deadly nevergreen (n.):** gallows.

**Derrick (n.):** a hangman.

**Natty lad (n.):** young thief or pickpocket. See **kiddeys**.

**Neck weed (n.):** hemp to be made into rope.

**Needle point (n.):** a card sharper.

**New drop (n.):** the gallows.

**Newman's lift (n.):** the gallows.

**Nig (n.):** the metal clipped off a coin by a criminal. See **parings**.

**Night magistrate (n.):** a constable.

**Nim (v.):** to steal or pilfer.

**Nip (n., v.):** a cheat, to cheat.

**Nipper, Nypper (n.):** a cutpurse, pickpocket. See **bung nipper**.

**Noisy dog racket (n.):** stealing brass door knockers from doors.

**Noozed (adj.):** hanged, married.

**Nose (n.):** a thief who gives evidence against his colleagues in order to gain a lighter sentence. See **rat**. See *Modern-* **snitch**.

**Nubbing:** hanging.

**Nubbing cheat (n.):** the gallows.

**Nubbing cove (n.):** the hangman.

**Nubbing ken (n.):** the courthouse.

## O

**Oak (n.):** a rich man.

**Oaken towel (n.):** a cudgel.

**Office (v.):** to "give office" is to tell constables of a thief's activities.

**Old hand (n.):** an experienced thief. Antonym of **footpad**.

**Onion (n.):** a seal or signet ring.

**Overseer (n.):** a man in the pillory or stocks.

## P

**Pad (n.):** the highway.

**Pad borrower (n.):** a horse thief.

**Palaver (n.):** a tale told in order to avoid blame for a crime.

**Panny (n.):** house.

**Parenthesis (n.):** the stocks.

**Parings (n.):** the metal clipped off a coin by a criminal. See **nig**.

**Patter flash (v., n.):** thieves' cant. See **flash lingo, gibberish, slang**.

## L

**Lag (n.):** a man transported for a crime.  
**Land pirate (n.):** a highwayman.  
**Lay (n.):** danger, or a thieving technique (e.g.: **dub lay**).  
**Leaf:** to "go with the fall of the leaf" is to be hanged.  
**Lift (v.):** steal.  
**Lightmans (n.):** daytime. See **darkmans**.  
**Little snakesman (n.):** a person (usually a small boy) passed through a window in order to open a door. See **fagger**.  
**Long tongued (adj.):** unable to keep a secret. See **rat**. See *Modern-snitch*.  
**Lowre (n.):** money.  
**Lully prigger (n.):** thief who steals wet clothes off clothes lines.  
**Lurch:** to be "left in the lurch" is to be betrayed by one's companions.

## M

**Mad Tom (n.):** a beggar who feigns madness. See **abram man, tom of bedlam**.  
**Made (adj.):** stolen.  
**Made man (n.):** a member of the thieves' guild.  
**Maunding (n.):** begging.  
**Milch cow (n.):** one who is easily tricked out of his money. See **pigeon**.  
**Moabite (n.):** bailiff.  
**Mobility (n.):** the commoners. Intended as a pun on 'nobility.'  
**Moon curser (n.):** a thief who uses the darkness as cover for his crime.  
**Moon man (n.):** vagrant, traveling thief, vagabond.  
**Morning drop (n.):** the gallows.  
**Mort, Mot (n.):** a woman.  
**Moss (n.):** lead stolen off the top of buildings.  
**Myrmidon (n.):** constable.

## N

**Nab (v.):** to seize.  
**Nab the stoop (v.):** to be put in the stocks.  
**Napper (n.):** a cheat or thief.  
**Napper of naps (n.):** a sheep stealer.

**Dimber Damber (n.):** a chief thief. See **arch rogue, prince prig**.  
**Ding Boy (n.):** a mugger.  
**Dive (v.):** to pick a pocket.  
**Dive (n.):** a thieves' hideout.  
**Dommerer (n.):** a beggar who pretends to be mute.  
**Drag (v.):** to follow a cart or wagon in order to rob it.  
**Draw-latches (n.):** robbers of houses.  
**Draw the King's picture (v.):** to counterfeit coins.  
**Dromedary (n.):** a bungling thief.  
**Dub (v.):** a lockpick. See **charm, kate, screw**.  
**Dub Lay:** the act of picking a lock, or robbing a house by lockpicking.  
**Dumme (n.):** a pocket book or purse.  
**Dumps (n.):** coins made of lead.  
**Die hard (v.):** to show no fear or remorse at the gallows.

## E

**Earnest (n.):** a promise to pay.  
**Equipt (adj.):** well dressed, rich.

## F

**Fagger (n.):** a person (usually a small boy) passed through a window in order to open the door to a house. See **little snakesman**.  
**Family man (n.):** receiver of stolen goods. See **fence**.  
**Fam lay (n., v.):** palming an item in order to steal it.  
**Fams (n.):** gloves.  
**Fence (v., n.):** to sell stolen goods. One who buys and sells stolen goods.  
**Fencing ken (n.):** a place where stolen goods are hidden.  
**Fidlam ben:** thieves.  
**Figging law (n.):** the art of picking pockets.  
**Figure dancer (n.):** one who alters numbers on credit notes or other paper money; counterfeiter.  
**Filcher (n.):** See **angler**. See *Modern-filch*.  
**Flash ken (n.):** a thieves' hideout.  
**Flash lingo (n.):** thieves' cant. See **gibberish, patter flash, slang**.  
**Floating hell (n.):** a prison ship.  
**Fob (v.):** to cheat.

**Footpad (n.):** a common or inexperienced thief. Antonym of **old hand**.  
**Fork (v.):** to pick a pocket.  
**Fortune teller (n.):** a judge.  
**Foyst (n.):** a pickpocket.  
**Frummagemmed (adj.):** strangled or hanged.  
**Fun (n.):** a cheat or a trick.  
**Fuzz (v.):** to pretend to shuffle a deck of cards.

## G

**Gallows bird (n.):** a thief, or someone who associates with them.  
**Game (n.):** any mode of robbery.  
**Gamon (v.):** to deceive.  
**Gaoler's coach (n.):** a cart used to take felons to execution.  
**Gentleman's master (n.):** a highwayman.  
**Gibberish (n.):** thieves' cant. See **flash lingo, patterflash**.  
**Gilt (n.):** a thief who picks locks.  
**Ginny (n.):** a crowbar. See **bess, betty, jemmy**.  
**Glazier (n.):** a thief who breaks windows in order to steal.  
**Glim (n.):** a lantern used in housebreaking.  
**Grease (v.):** to bribe.  
**Gregorian tree (n.):** gallows.  
**Gudgeon (n.):** a gullible person.  
**Gull (n., v.):** a gullible person, to cheat someone.

## H

**Hamlet (n.):** a senior constable.  
**Hang gallows look (n.):** a villainous appearance.  
**Hang in chains (n.):** a vile, desperate person.  
**Harman (n.):** a constable.  
**Harmans (n.):** the stocks.  
**Hearty choke (v.):** to be hanged.  
**Heave (v.):** to rob.  
**Hempen fever:** a person who has been hanged is said to have died of "hempen fever."  
**Hempen widow (n.):** one whose partner was hanged.  
**High pad (n.):** a highwayman.

**Hike (v.):** to run away.  
**Hoist (v.):** to rob by entering through windows that have been left open.  
**Hoodwink (v.):** to blindfold or fool someone.  
**Hooked (adj.):** captured.  
**Hookers:** See **angler**.  
**Hubbub (n.):** a riot.  
**Hush (v.):** to murder.  
**Hush money (n.):** a bribe.

## I

**Iron (n.):** money.  
**Ironmongers shop:** to "keep an ironmonger's shop" is to be chained up.

## J

**Jack in a box (n.):** a card sharper.  
**Jack Ketch (n.):** hangman.  
**Jail bird (n.):** prisoner.  
**Jammed (adj.):** hanged.  
**Jem (n.):** a gold ring.  
**Jemmy (n.):** a crow bar. See **bess, betty, ginny**.  
**Jigger (n.):** whipping post.  
**Jordain (n.):** a stick or staff used by muggers.  
**Juggler's box (n.):** the device used to brand the hands of criminals.  
**Jukrum (n.):** the permission of the head of a thieves' guild to operate within his territory.

## K

**Kate (n.):** a lockpick. See **charm, dub, screw**.  
**Ken (n.):** a house.  
**Ken miller, ken cracker (n.):** housebreaker.  
**Ketch (n.):** hangman.  
**Kiddeys (n.):** young thieves. See **natty lad**.  
**King's plate (n.):** chains, shackles.  
**King's pictures (n.):** money.  
**Knight of the blade (n.):** a bully or ruffian.  
**Knight of the post (n.):** a man willing to give fake evidence for money.  
**Knight of the road (n.):** a highwayman.